

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00
SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 /048 W
-----108486 151140Z /15

O R 151122Z SEP 77 ZFF 4
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 8623
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION NATO
USNMR SHAPE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
USMISSION USBERLIN
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
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AMCONSUL NICE
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 26815

DELIVER OPENING OF BUSINESS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, FR
SUBJECT: LEFT SUMMIT SUSPENDED

SUMMARY. THE UNION OF THE LEFT EXPERIENCED ITS MOST SERIOUS CRISIS TO DATE SEPTEMBER 14 AS THE LEFT RADICALS (MRG) BROKE OFF COMMON PROGRAM NEGOTIATIONS IN THE FACE OF ALLEGED COMMUNIST (PCF) INTRANSIGENCE ON THE QUESTION OF FURTHER NATIONALIZATIONS. AFTER NINE HOURS OF CONSULTATION, MRG LEADER ROBERT FABRE ANNOUNCED THAT THE SUMMIT COULD NOT BE CONTINUED UNTIL THE PCF SHOWED WILLINGNESS TO COMPROMISE. THE COMMUNISTS PLACED THE BLAME SQUARELY ON THE MRG AND OFFERED TO RESUME NEGOTIATIONS SEPTEMBER 15 WITH EITHER ONE OR BOTH OF ITS LEFT PARTNERS. THE UNION'S SENIOR PARTNER, THE SOCIALIST PARTY (PS), HAS NOT CHOSEN SIDES, BUT WILL NOT TAKE UP IMMEDIATELY THE PCF OFFER FOR CONTINUED BILATERAL TALKS. FRANCOIS MITTERRAND, IN ANNOUNCING A PS DIRECTING COMMITTEE MEETING FOR SEPTEMBER 19, HAS BOUGHT TIME TO LET TEMPERS COOL. THE PS HAS A MAJOR STAKE IN PATCHING THINGS TOGETHER. AS FOR GISCARD AND BARRE, THEY CAN ONLY BE HEARTENED BY WHAT COULD BE THE FIRST STAGE IN A RUPTURE OF THE LEFT COALITION.
END SUMMARY.

1. LEFT SUMMIT COLLAPSES: MEETING SEPTEMBER 14 IN AN
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EFFORT TO HAMMER OUT AGREEMENT ON AN UPDATED COMMON PROGRAM, LEFT LEADERS SPENT MORE THAN NINE HOURS IN CLOSED SESSION BEFORE THE SURPRISE ANNOUNCEMENT BY MRG LEADER FABRE THAT HIS PARTY WAS SUSPENDING NEGOTIATIONS. FABRE'S OPENING REMARKS HAD IN FACT LAID THE GROUNDWORK FOR THIS DECISION, SPELLING OUT ONCE AGAIN THE MRG POSITION IN FAVOR OF A "PROFOUND MODIFICATION OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL STRUCTURES LEADING TO A TRUE ADVANCED SODEMOCRACY" BUT TOTALLY OPPOSED TO STATE CAPITALISM OR COLLECTIVISM (READ FURTHER NATIONALIZATIONS BEYOND THOSE PRESCRIBED IN THE 1972 COMMON PROGRAM). WHILE FABRE CLAIMED PUBLICLY THAT THE COMMUNISTS WERE TOTALLY UNWILLING TO COMPROMISE ON THE NATIONALIZATION ISSUE, MARCHAIS SAID THAT THE ISSUE HAD HARDLY BEEN BROACHED. PRIVATELY TO US, MRG DELEGATES PLACED MOST EMPHASIS ON PCF REFUSAL TO BUDGE ON THE QUESTION OF SELECTING WORKER REPRESENTATIVES FOR THE COUNCILS WHICH WILL ADMINISTER NATIONALIZED INDUSTRIES (PCF FAVORS SELECTION FROM UNION LISTS WHERE THE CGT WOULD LIKELY DOMINATE).

2. SOCIALIST RESPONSE: PS LEADERS, WHO HAD BEEN

REASONABLY OPTIMISTIC DURING THE DAY (NOTING TO EMBOFF
THAT PROGRESS WAS BEING MADE ON ALL BUT THE MOST CRITI-
CAL POINTS AND THAT EVERYONE SEEMED AGREED TO MEET
AGAIN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE) SEEMED TAKEN SOMEWHAT OFF
GUARD BY THE SUDDEN MRG DECISION. ALTHOUGH FAR FROM
SATISFIED WITH THE LIMITED EXTENT OF PCF FLEXIBILITY,
THE SOCIALISTS WERE AT LEAST WILLING TO CONTINUE TALK-
ING. IN DELAYING A FINAL PS DECISION UNTIL THE SEP-
TEMBER 19 DIRECTING COMMITTEE MEETING, MITTERRAND BUYS
TIME FOR FURTHER REFLECTION BY BOTH THE MRG AND THE PS.
HE WILL NOT IMMEDIATELY ACCEPT BILATERAL TALKS WITH THE
COMMUNISTS, BUT SUCH A POSSIBILITY REMAINS OPEN, PARTI-

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CULARLY IF THE SOCIALISTS DECIDE THAT MRG ACTION WAS
PRECIPITOUS.

3. PS OPTIONS: THE STAKES OF THE GAME ARE HIGH. SEEN
FROM THE PS PERSPECTIVE:

- IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THE LEFT CAN WIN IN
1978 WITHOUT A COMMON PROGRAM (I.E. WITH
ONLY A LOOSE ELECTORAL ALLIANCE), BUT NEITHER
CAN IT WIN WITH A PROGRAM WHICH IS CLEARLY
DEMAGOGIC AND ECONOMICALLY UNSOUND;
- ANY ELECTORAL SOLUTION OUTSIDE THE UNION OF
THE LEFT IS EXTREMELY DELICATE AND PROBABLY
UNACCEPTABLE. A MINORITY GOVERNMENT WITH PCF
SUPPORT ON THE ITALIAN MODEL WOULD LIKELY BE
SHORT-LIVED, WITH PRESSURES FROM BOTH LEFT
AND RIGHT;
- WHILE A LEFT-CENTER ARRANGEMENT, ALSO IN A
MINORITY POSITION, WOULD FACE SIMILAR OBSTA-
CLES, AND IN NEITHER CASE WOULD AN AGGRESSIVE
PROGRAM OF GOVERNMENT BE POSSIBLE.

MITTERRAND IS PRESSED TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO KEEP
THE UNION OF THE LEFT AFLOAT, BUT HE CANNOT DO IT ALONE.
THE DECISIVE FACTOR IS COMMUNIST WILLINGNESS TO COMPRO-
MISE. IF THEY REMAIN INTRANSIGENT, MITTERRAND HAS LITTLE
CHOICE BUT TO ABANDON THE SEARCH FOR AN UPDATED COMMON
PROGRAM (ALTHOUGH THE PS ALONE MIGHT RETAIN THE EXISTING

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VERSION); TO ACCEPT PCF DEMANDS NOW WILL COST HIM THE CENTER VOTES NECESSARY FOR VICTORY AND, IN DEMONSTRATING CLEARLY WHO CALLS THE SHOTS, MAKE HIM EVEN MORE HOSTAGE TO PCF PRESSURES IN THE FUTURE. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF THE COMMUNISTS BEND FOR THE SAKE OF LEFT UNITY, MITTERRAND'S POSITION COULD BE ENHANCED, PARTICULARLY IF HE EMERGED AS THE CONCILIATOR BETWEEN THE PCF AND THE MRG.

4. THE COMMUNIST ANGLE: IF THE PCF WAS INDEED AS INTRANSIGENT AS THE LEFT RADICALS ALLEGE (AND PCF PROPAGANDA OF THE LAST SIX WEEKS LENDS SUPPORT TO THAT PROPOSITION), THEN THE ELECTORAL EQUATION HAS CHANGED IN A MOST IMPORTANT SENSE: WHEREAS PCF DESIRE TO ENTER GOVERNMENT HAS HERETOFORE BEEN A DRIVING FORCE WHICH PROVIDED MITTERRAND WITH THE NECESSARY LEVERAGE TO PRODUCE COMMUNIST CONCESSIONS WHEN NECESSARY, PCF INTRANSIGENCE WOULD MARK THE ABANDONMENT OF THAT DESIRE. COMMUNIST FAILURE TO COMPROMISE, KNOWING FULL WELL THAT NEITHER ITSPARTNERS NOR THE LEFT ELECTORATE CAN SWALLOW ITS PROGRAM WHOLE AND IN THE FACE OF PS CONCESSIONS WHICH WOULD SATISFY SOME PCF DEMANDS, WOULD CLEARLY INDICATE THAT THE PARTY HAS GOTTEN COLD FEET, CERTAINLY ON THE PROSPECTS FOR GOVERNING IN 1978 IF NOT IN THE LONGER TERM. THE PCF'S RATIONALE FOR SUCH A DECISION, AFTER 15 YEARS OF WORKING ITS WAY THIS CLOSE TO POWER, COULD TAKE MANY FORMS (LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE, DISTRUST OF PS PARTNERS, FEAR OF LOSING IDEOLOGICAL PURITY, ETC.), BUT THE DECISION ITSELF WOULD BE NO LESS ASTOUNDING. IN EFFECT, THE COMMUNISTS WOULD BE OPTING TO BYPASS THEIR BEST CHANCE EVER, NOT JUST TO GOVERN BUT TO DO SO UNDER THE GUARANTEE OF A PROGRAM WHICH IN FACT PROMISES MAJOR STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN FRENCH SOCIETY.

5. WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?: THE PS WILL CERTAINLY DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO PATCH UP THE UNION SIMPLY
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BECAUSE A LEAKY BOAT IS BETTER THAN NONE AT ALL. THAT MIGHT MEAN TRYING A TWOSOME WHERE A THREESOME FAILED. BUT IF THE COMMUNISTS ARE INDEED SET ON A NEW COURSE AND PERSIST IN THEIR REFUSAL TO COMPROMISE, THERE WOULD SEEM LITTLE CHOICE LEFT BUT TO ABANDON THE UNION OF THE LEFT IN ITS CURRENT FORM, AT BEST HOPING FOR SOME OTHER,

LOOSER FORM OF ELECTORAL ALLIANCE. WITH SIX MONTHS
REMAINING UNTIL THE ELECTIONS, THE PS WOULD STILL HAVE
TIME TO CHART A NEW COURSE, ALBEIT A MOST UNCERTAIN
ONE.
HARLAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SUMMIT MEETINGS, NEGOTIATIONS, COMMUNISTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 15-Sep-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977PARIS26815
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770334-1363
Format: TEL
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770960/aaaabylu.tel
Line Count: 283
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 5f25aa45-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1263193
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LEFT SUMMIT SUSPENDED SUMMARY. THE UNION OF THE LEFT EXPERIENCED ITS MOST SERIOUS CRISIS TO DATE SEPTEMBER 14 AS THE LEFT RA
TAGS: PINT, FR, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/5f25aa45-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009